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ART. VI. — 1. *Diplomatic Correspondence for the Years* 1861, 1862, 1863, and 1864. Washington. 9 vols. 8vo.
2. *Documents relating to Mexican Affairs.* 1862, 1863, and 1865. Washington. 3 vols. 8vo.

IT is now more than fifteen years since Secretary Seward, then a United States Senator, in a speech which deserves to be remembered for its masterly grasp of the slavery problem, met the threats of Southern disunionists with the warning, that, if they should bring on civil war, a violent but complete emancipation of the negro race would follow, and that the day when the fountains of popular contentment should be broken up would bring forth the highest illustration of the excellence of our system of government. "Then it will be seen," said he, "how calmly, how firmly, how nobly a great people can act in preserving their Constitution, — whom 'love of country moveth, example teacheth, company comforteth, emulation quickeneth, and glory exalteth.'"

In the revolution through which we have lately passed, — wherein Mr. Seward himself has borne no light part, — these words have proved prophetic; and not only is the land freed from a social curse, but popular institutions have endured the severest test, and come forth from the contest strong and vigorous, without the loss of a single prerogative. De Tocqueville's theory that democracy is incapable of sustained effort stands controverted by an historical fact; and while similar struggles to our own have generally resulted in anarchy or military despotism, the singular spectacle of a law-loving people growing wiser as the strife grows hotter, becoming revolutionists in self-defence, drawing upon their resources with care and moderation, now following up an advantage, now retrieving an error, patient in tribulation and magnanimous in the flush of victory, — all this has been reserved for America and for these latter days.

The foreign no less than the domestic policy of President Lincoln was marked by certain leading traits, — patience, good judgment, forbearance almost unparalleled, and a faith in the final triumph of republican principles which could not be

shaken. Those who look for subtilties, finesse, and strategical combinations, such as are too often displayed on the chessboard of European politics, will be disappointed. The late administration, in its intercourse with other nations, chose to consider that governments are subject to the same rules of morality as individuals. The spirit manifested was frank, generous, and consistent. The policy was simple and thoroughly American, based upon the Jeffersonian maxim of good faith and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none. Of necessity it was a defensive policy; and while some important treaties were negotiated, its chief merit is not in what it developed, but in what it prevented. It was, however, the policy for the times; and if the national pride was sometimes wounded, the country's honor was never surrendered.

We purpose in this article to touch upon some of the leading points in the diplomatic history of the late Rebellion, as illustrated in the volumes of correspondence issued by the State Department. Diplomacy is not a favorite word with Americans, eager for results and impatient of delays; and we are apt to consider the management of foreign relations as a system of political chicanery, a science of prudent delays adopted by nations seeking to outwit one another while each pursues its secret schemes of aggrandizement. That this is a partial and illiberal view of the subject need not here be argued; but no candid person can read these volumes without feeling that the history of our foreign relations during the last four years is closely identified with the cause of civilization, — that it is America's complete vindication pronounced before the assembled powers of the earth, that most solemn of human tribunals. We should feel proud of the record. It exhibits an enlarged and comprehensive statesmanship. And surely, when we consider that from the outset the two leading powers of Europe, jealous of our growth and hostile to democratic principles, persisted in a course of action which aimed at our dissolution; that they concerted schemes for the encouragement of the disloyal, so far as might conduce to this result; that nevertheless they were for four years constrained to postpone the question of recognition, and to respect a blockade not at all times complete, from which they suffered greatly; —

when we consider that a single indiscreet act, an official despatch arrogant or tamely submissive in its tone, might have involved us in a hopeless war; that no opportunity was afforded them of intervention, either as open enemies or under the guise of a friendly mediation; that as neutrals they were held to observance of the laws of neutrality, and at last compelled to withdraw their concession of belligerent rights and to acknowledge the supremacy of the Union of these States, — surely the foreign policy of President Lincoln may be pronounced no less successful than honorable.

When President Lincoln's term commenced, our foreign relations were in a pitiable state, and all things seemed hastening to destruction. The friends of the Union abroad were lukewarm and divided, while the new Confederacy was vigorously urging its claims. Influential partisans of the latter had already been secured in England and France. The insurgents expected material assistance from abroad; and with the conviction that cotton was king, they appealed not altogether in vain to the jealousy and cupidity of our commercial rivals. Our new tariff, already unpopular in England and France, was made doubly odious through their efforts. The new President was assailed with coarse abuse and ridicule, as the vulgar leader of a root-and-branch party. The monarchical tendencies of the Southern planters found favor with the cabinets of Europe, and their doctrines of Secession and State Rights had been so generally accepted that the sources of public opinion were poisoned. Meantime the diplomatic and consular agents of the United States were remiss in their duties. Some secretly favored the Confederates, others manifested an indifference scarcely less injurious to the national cause. Mr. Faulkner, Minister to France, and Mr. Preston, to Spain, had the insolence, in their official despatches, to warn the Executive, with threats, against what they termed "coercion"; while the former, as there is reason to believe, was treacherous enough to lend his official influence in procuring arms to be used for insurrectionary purposes.

An entire change was made in the foreign appointments under the new administration; and although the leading missions were filled before the necessity of civil war had deter-

mined the President's policy, scarcely an important change has since been made. The nation was fortunate in securing Mr. Seward as Secretary of State. Charles Francis Adams, at the Court of St. James, stands deservedly first among our ministers, and has attained the highest diplomatic honors. Mr. Dayton performed his duties with dignity and ability to the day of his death. Mr. Corwin, by reason of his course in Congress relative to the last war, had a strong personal hold upon the feelings of the Mexican people. Some of the less important missions were admirably conducted. Nor should the consuls at Liverpool and London be forgotten, who watched with sleepless vigilance the British privateers and collected important information as to their movements.

The instructions issued by Mr. Seward to the new ministers set forth the general principles of the foreign policy to be pursued by our government. The Union at all hazards was the key-note of this policy. The idea of a dissolution, or even of a compromise, was not to be entertained for a moment. It was announced that the chief duty of our diplomatic agents would be to counteract the schemes of Rebels abroad. Foreign nations were to be assured of our determination and ability to maintain our own cause without their assistance. So long as they should abstain from encouraging the insurgents, we desired and courted their alliance, but they could not favor our enemies and remain our friends. The merits of the controversy between North and South, as though it was a question admitting of argument, were not to be discussed; and that strength might not be wasted on side issues, the topic of slavery was to be avoided. Some of the commercial advantages resulting from a continuance of this Union were suggested, especially with reference to England and France; but no promises of special favors were held out as arguments for our side. As to the dissatisfaction existing in England on the subject of the tariff, it might be said, that, if ruinous to her interests, it was likely to prove injurious to us as well, and that after all a tariff could easily be modified by Congress whenever change should be shown desirable. Above all, the duty of generous forbearance was urged; and the representatives of the Union were directed not to indulge in expressions of harsh-

ness, or even of impatience, concerning their misguided countrymen. "If the scourge of civil war for the first time in our history must fall upon our country during the term of this administration," is the admirable language of Secretary Seward to Mr. Adams, "that calamity will then have come through the agency, not of the government, but of those who shall have chosen to be its armed, open, and irreconcilable enemies; and the President will not suffer himself to doubt that, when the value of the imperilled Union shall be brought in that fearful manner home to the business and the bosoms of the American people, they will, with an unanimity that shall vindicate their wisdom and their virtue, rise up and save it." *

Our relations with Great Britain and France were from the first of absorbing importance. The former saw in the approaching conflict the possible annihilation of her commercial rival, and, with "Divide and conquer" for her motto, shaped her course accordingly. The latter, projecting brilliant schemes of conquest, and aiming to secure a foothold on the Western continent, pursued, but with far more stealth and caution, a similar policy. Had either of these nations manifested a just and liberal spirit, civil war might have been speedily crushed, and certainly some of its greatest evils would have been avoided. But although we had maintained peaceful relations with them for half a century, it soon became apparent that their moral support would be wanting. The Confederates drew "the very breath of life" (as Mr. Adams termed it) from the belief of a speedy recognition and the ambiguous expressions of Earl Russell and M. Thouvenel. The disposition of the former to hold unofficial intercourse with the Southern commissioners, and the secret engagement between France and England to act together in American affairs, of which other European powers were notified, indicated a hostile spirit even before the fall of Fort Sumter.

Scarcely had the first note of war sounded, however, before that policy of neutrality was proclaimed which has since proved fruitful of disaster. Great Britain led off, France followed; Spain and most of the smaller European powers brought up the rear. They neither waited for official information of the

* Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861, p. 59.

blockade, nor allowed our ministers time to present their credentials and explain the purposes of the new administration. They hastened to welcome an insurgent faction, struggling to perpetuate the worn-out system of negro slavery, before it had exhibited an armed vessel on the ocean, or achieved a single victory save that of starving into surrender a handful of brave men who would not betray their country's flag. The practical effect of this policy was to encourage Rebel depredations on the ocean, to resolve the war for maintaining the integrity of this Union into a mere contention of two parties, and to protect piracy on the high seas under the name of privateering. President Lincoln pressed earnestly, whenever there was an opportunity, for the withdrawal of the belligerent rights so hastily and so unjustly conferred; but Great Britain and France would not yield, until Grant had given the death-blow to the Rebellion; and even then, on the part of Great Britain, there were such qualifications as allowed the Shenandoah to harass American shipping for months after the restoration of peace.

In another point of view this conduct was extraordinary. By their accession to the convention of Paris these two nations had committed themselves to the abolition of privateering, as a practice contrary to the spirit of civilized warfare. But with such professions of humanity they countenanced and encouraged an application of the old rule beyond example harsh and violent. It is true that our government, under Presidents Pierce and Buchanan, had not acceded to this convention; but Secretary Seward, on receiving intelligence of the Queen's proclamation, anticipated foreign complications which the Rebels would seek in every method to turn to their advantage, and instructed our ministers to resume negotiations, with the view of making the United States a party to the new principles of international law; but Great Britain and France refused to admit our accession to the treaty of Paris,—which would have bound them to aid in sweeping American privateers from the ocean,—except with the distinct stipulation that its provisions should have no bearing, direct or indirect, upon the war then existing. Here the subject dropped, and simultaneously with this failure on our part the work of the Southern cruisers began.

The relations of the United States with Great Britain during the Rebellion have been so fully discussed, that we seem, in considering them, to be entering territory already occupied. Earl Russell's diplomacy exhibited little reserve, while the pulse of the English nation was steadily held by Mr. Adams, and each vibration promptly recorded. Bound to us by ties of a common lineage, language, and literature, Great Britain nevertheless chose to be the most conspicuous of our antagonists. Privateers were sheltered in the British colonial ports, while other nations excluded them. The British press was subservient to the interests of Secessionists; blockade-running was almost exclusively a British diversion, the risks being taken by British insurance companies; British capitalists invested in the Southern loans; British subjects in the United States were Rebel agents and emissaries; British merchants furnished ammunition and supplies. More than this. Great Britain was for two years the naval base of Rebel operations. Piratical vessels built and equipped in British ports, and manned with British gunners, issued forth one by one and roamed at large upon the ocean to prey upon our commerce, seldom anchoring in a Southern harbor, and never bringing in their captures for judicial proceedings. While the national cause appeared to falter, the clamor was loud for intervention; when each new campaign brought fresh hopes of success, the cry was fainter; when the glorious victories of Gettysburg, Vickbsurg, and Port Hudson were announced, it finally died away.

The late administration has sometimes been censured for holding out false hopes as to the speedy termination of the war; and more especially have the "ninety-days" predictions of Secretary Seward exposed him to reproach and ridicule. So far as the published volumes of correspondence show, such announcements were based upon the contingency that England and France should discountenance the schemes of the insurgents. Granting, however, that the military strength of the Rebellion was underrated, — which is simply to admit that man is fallible, — it may be doubted whether anything short of absolute faith in our ultimate success would have brought about our ultimate triumph. *Possunt quia posse videntur.* Our strength lay in our confidence of strength. Lord Bacon, if we

mistake not, regards it as the maxim of a wise statesman in time of danger to lead the people from hope to hope. Would America have undertaken with zeal the salvation of this Union, believing that the contest would last four weary and painful years? Or would Europe have hovered in anxiety over the battle-field so long, and not pounced down upon her coveted prey?

Twice were matters brought to a crisis between the two countries: first, by Earl Russell after the capture of Mason and Slidell; secondly, by Secretary Seward, when that decision was rendered in the Alexandra case which practically annulled the Enlistment Act, and protected the equipment of hostile vessels in neutral ports.

The skill with which our government handled so delicate a topic of controversy as the Trent affair, and turned Great Britain's weapon against herself, has called forth the general tribute of respect and admiration. If ever silence on the part of the Executive was golden, it was at that moment when Captain Wilkes arrived in port with the Rebel envoys. The spontaneous impulse of the people, already sensitive to English affronts, was to adopt, without regard to consequences, an act appealing strongly to the sentiment of national pride by its very audacity. Congress was in session, and the House of Representatives passed a vote of thanks to the commander of the San Jacinto. Statesmen were carried away by their feelings in the midst of the general excitement. But, uninfluenced by prejudice or passion, the President and Secretary of State stood firm. The ground was calmly surveyed, and the subject viewed in its future as well as its present bearings. There was no necessity of raising a point of honor; nothing had been said or done to commit the government; the recreant knights-errant of diplomacy were to be held in custody until the case was decided, and principles of international law should determine our course of action. Were Mason and Slidell included as Rebel envoys under the term "contraband of war," and therefore subject to capture? Granting that such was the case, was the method of their capture justifiable? Was not the right of search strenuously resisted by America in 1812? Would our interests as a commercial power be promoted by the

adoption of a precedent which allows a belligerent commander to settle questions of confiscation on the deck of a neutral steamer? If not, was it wise to plunge into a foreign war, while the national resources were strained in suppressing domestic insurrection? Such were the considerations, and the conclusion was irresistible. "If I decide this case in favor of my own government," wrote Secretary Seward in that remarkable letter which proclaimed the liberation of the prisoners, "I must disavow its most cherished principles, and reverse and forever abandon its essential policy. The country cannot afford the sacrifice. If I maintain those principles and adhere to that policy, I must surrender the case itself." *

Had President Lincoln, catching the breeze of popular favor, accepted the challenge of Great Britain, and gone to war for the sake of gratifying a false sense of national honor, the consequences must have been disastrous. All Europe protested against the seizure of the Trent as illegal, — which fact, however, was not known at the time of his decision, and had no influence upon it. Southern disloyalists, according to their historian, Mr. Pollard, looked upon the Trent affair as a special dispensation, and their friends in Congress, under the lead of Vallandigham, attempted to force a war by legislative enactment. But pursuing the path of safety, the administration brought to its support the sober second-thought of the people. Europe, so far from looking upon this decision as a weak surrender, accepted it as the strongest indication of our good judgment and honest intentions. In Great Britain there was a temporary reaction in our favor. The opponents of the Union were baffled; the question of recognition was postponed; and the North found time for developing its resources. The British government stood committed to a precedent which tended to restrain the proverbial tendencies of England on the ocean; while America gave more convincing proof than ever before that the difficult lesson of self-government had been mastered.

Our second crisis came nearly two years later. There was then a better feeling in the British community. The war to suppress insurrection had in the fulness of time become a

* Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861, p. 425, et seq.

moral revolution; the idea of a restoration of the Union with its Constitution unchanged and unimpaired had been slowly abandoned; and freedom was at length inscribed on the banners of the Republic. This change of policy was not without its effects on a nation which had professed a stolid indifference to the merits of the original controversy, and had stigmatized the war on our part as a contest for empire, taking the view that a certain number of States sought to be released from a burdensome compact, while the others would not suffer them to depart in peace. The decree of emancipation called out the friends of freedom and reform, — a party always strong and vigorous; and numerous addresses of sympathy were issued by the anti-slavery societies and trades' unions in England, and forwarded to President Lincoln through Mr. Adams. The poorer classes turned their thoughts to a home in the New World; and emigration was stimulated and encouraged by this government as part of the regenerating work of its new career. Lord Palmerston's Ministry, which, despite its aristocratic bearing, leaned to the popular and liberal side, now softened its tone, and a better spirit toward the United States was indicated in the spring of 1863 by Earl Russell's speeches in Parliament, and still more by the seizure of the Alexandra. But the relations of the two countries were by no means satisfactory. It was now our turn to complain. We had tasted the sweets of British neutrality, and scarcely a week passed without bringing home to our merchants the news of some fresh spoliation on the high seas. American shipping was seeking protection under a foreign flag. Congress had authorized the President to issue letters of marque and reprisal. Mr. Adams had been promptly instructed to present the Alabama claims to the British government, and to press them discreetly; but Earl Russell repudiated all responsibility for our wrongs. The wealthy and conservative classes were still bitterly hostile. The Confederate cotton loan had been entirely taken up by them. New privateers were on the stocks, and the Lairds had commenced two formidable iron rams for operations against Northern cities. In Parliament a violent party, under Mr. Roebuck, sought to compel the immediate recognition of the Southern Confederacy. The Alabama controversy had drawn

out the suggestion from the British Secretary, that mutual amendments might be made so as to render the enlistment laws of the two countries more effective; but when Secretary Seward acceded to the proposal, it appeared that the Lord Chancellor considered the present act already sufficient, and that the Cabinet would consent to no change. Five months later, a fitting commentary upon this vacillating conduct was furnished by the decision of the Chief Baron of the Exchequer in the Alexandra case, to the effect that fitting out vessels and selling them for hostile purposes was no breach of the Enlist ment Act. This last piece of jugglery was not to be endured. The tide of military success had turned in our favor; and Secretary Seward now plainly declared, that, if the Alexandra doctrine should be sustained in the higher court, one of two things remained, — either that Great Britain should remedy the defects of the existing laws by additional legislation, or that the United States would protect its commerce against Liverpool armed cruisers as against the naval forces of a public enemy, and would claim and insist upon indemnity for its injuries.*

This last appeal, strengthened as it was by the announcement of the July victories, and the perilous situation of European politics, brought the Palmerston Ministry to a better comprehension of its duties. Henceforth there was a disposition to maintain neutral obligations, and avoid rupture with a government which had so formidable a navy to enforce its demand. The tone of Parliament changed. The iron rams were detained by order of the crown, and held for trial. But in the courts justice was not swift-footed. The Alexandra case, like a wounded snake, dragged its slow length up to the House of Lords, and was lost in its own convolutions; and to relieve themselves of a dilemma, the officers of government were obliged to purchase the iron-clads. Only one case, that of the Pampero, was prosecuted to a successful issue in the Scotch courts, and the sentence of condemnation actually pronounced. The struggle rapidly degenerated into a mere effort on the weaker side to do all the mischief possible; and while the rescue of Semmes at the sinking of the Alabama and the St.

* Diplomatic Correspondence, 1863, p. 308.

Albans raid, showed that British friendship was the result of expediency rather than conviction, the danger of foreign war was over.

That sort of *laissez-faire* policy which the Palmerston Ministry early adopted in American matters, and which indirectly abetted the enemies of this Union, contrasts strongly with the vigilance and activity of late displayed in suppressing Fenianism. No one can doubt that a vigorous enforcement of the Enlistment Act would have prevented England from becoming the modern rival of the Barbary powers; and in spite of a jealous aristocracy, avaricious traders, and obsequious judges, the Southern cause would have withered for want of root. It is the duty of neutral nations to protect their good faith against the efforts of all ill-disposed subjects; and if a conviction cannot always be procured, prompt legal prosecution will sometimes clear the atmosphere wonderfully. When the French Revolution was at its height, and Minister Genet, with the prestige of his government to aid him, undertook to launch privateers from American ship-yards against the proud mistress of the seas, Washington resented it as a national insult. "Is the Minister of the French Republic to set the acts of this government at defiance with impunity?" was his indignant exclamation. Not long after, he signed a treaty which provided indemnity for the losses sustained by Great Britain through the remissness of subordinate officers, deeming it not derogatory to his country's dignity to remove a blemish from its fair name. How has this conduct been rewarded? British neutrality during the Rebellion was a gilded fraud. There was no strong arm to interpose the law between popular sympathy and public duty. Judicial decisions were invariably inspired by the desires of the hour. Our minister and consuls made the complaints, collected the evidence, and put the wheels of justice in motion; the crown officers, the customs commissioners, — whose "wilful blindness and credulous partiality" were well understood by Mr. Adams, — the judiciary itself, interposed delays and impediments. The United States, in such cases as the Trent, Perthshire, and Labuan, manifested respect for the principles of international law, even when it conflicted with our interests; but Great Britain made her own opinion her law, and, blindly

pursuing a selfish policy, founded her justification on the maxim, "The king can do no wrong," or, as modern authority has it, "Her Majesty's government are the sole custodians of their own honor."

We have not touched upon the Alabama controversy, because it has been exhausted by others, and is well understood by our readers. Mr. Adams has ably argued the case for this government; and the British nation can hardly suffer the subject to rest where Earl Russell, in his obstinacy and ill-temper, has seen fit to place it. We cannot retrace our steps; the time may come when the British government will wish to retrace theirs. Let reparation be made quickly, that it may be made honorably, before British merchants find their traffic given over to savage corsairs, — before it is too late to wipe out an infamous precedent, — before experience teaches that the Alabama lesson has a twofold application. Then we trust that privateering will take its place with piracy, and be at once and forever abolished from the code of civilized and Christian nations.

Neutral precedents have sometimes been adduced in defence of this covert war upon American commerce. Questions of international policy must be determined by broader considerations; and a case precisely analogous to our own cannot be found in history. The rogue sometimes goes unwhipt of justice, because the law is of limited application and cannot reach him; but nations, in their mutual intercourse, are not hampered by narrow rules or technical constructions. If existing laws are insufficient, the remedy is at hand. If officials are remiss in their duties, they can be removed. There is a philosophy, as well as a law, in politics, which cannot safely be disregarded. To sum up the case, no language can be more forcible than that of the statesman at the Court of St. James: "That Great Britain did, in the most terrible moment of our domestic trial in struggling with a monstrous social evil she had earnestly professed to abhor, coldly and at once assume our inability to master it, and then become the only foreign nation steadily contributing, in every indirect way possible, to verify its prejudgment." *

* Diplomatic Correspondence, 1862, p. 53.

The conduct of the Emperor Napoleon during the Rebellion was not such as to inspire confidence in either his wisdom or integrity. There was a certain show of fairness in his neutral policy, which contrasted favorably with the demeanor of his neighbors across the Channel; but while professing the most earnest solicitude for our welfare, he was secretly developing schemes, which, as he well knew, depended for their success upon the downfall of our Republic. France, "our earliest friend and only ally," whose sword was drawn in the cause of American independence, and whose name was once a talisman to the oppressed, little resembled that imperial nursling which to-day rears its head among the nations, begotten, bred, and brought up by the heir of a great name, who,

> "Having both the key
> Of officer and office, set all hearts i' the state
> To what tune pleased his ear."

The Mexican policy of the Emperor, not yet fully understood, and still looming up dark and doubtful in the horizon, aroused the alarm and suspicion of our government at an early day, and now deserves especial consideration.

At the outbreak of the Southern insurrection, Mexico was in an exhausted condition, after a long war of factions. Scarcely the shadow of a republic remained. The Juarez administration had neither sufficient force nor hold on the public confidence to maintain order. Guerilla bands infested the mountain passes; the transportation of the mails was irregular and uncertain; highway robberies were of frequent occurrence; and a member of the American legation, journeying from the capital to Vera Cruz, had been waylaid and murdered. The archives at Washington were filled with complaints of rapacity, cruelties, and violation of contracts. European residents in Mexico suffered wrongs similar to our own; and so serious had this chaotic condition of affairs become, that the establishment of a protectorate of some sort was held under consideration on both sides of the Atlantic when Buchanan's term of office expired.

But President Lincoln favored neither intervention nor the peaceable annexation of Mexico. His policy was humane, generous, and disinterested. Recognizing the duty which rested

upon the United States, in common with the Spanish-American republics, of protecting constitutional liberty on this continent, so far as comported with the sovereignty of independent governments, — willing, moreover, to refrain, for the time being, from pressing our indemnity claims, — he desired that Mexico should retain its integrity, unimpaired by external influences, and by a prudent course of conduct should avoid the danger of Southern, no less than European aggression. Mr. Corwin, before setting out, was instructed to keep this object in view, to cultivate friendly relations with the Juarez government, to gain the confidence of the Mexican people, and to show that his mission was characterized by a spirit "earnestly American, in the continental sense of the word, and fraternal in no affected or mere diplomatic meaning of the term." *

But the impending storm was ready to burst upon this unhappy people, and the impolicy of the ruling administration hastened their calamities. On the 17th of July, 1861, a law was passed suspending for two years the payment of interest on the foreign debt, which was held chiefly by Spain and Great Britain. A quarrel immediately ensued. France and England suspended diplomatic intercourse with the Mexican republic, and entered into negotiations for a joint expedition. Spain also became a party to their agreement, having wrongs of her own to settle. On the 31st of October a treaty was ratified at London, by which the contracting powers bound themselves to send a naval and military force to Mexico, for the alleged purpose of demanding more efficient protection for the persons and properties of their subjects and the fulfilment of obligations. A clause, which was inserted through the persistent efforts of Great Britain, contrary to the wishes of her colleagues, provided that the allied powers should not seek "any acquisition of territory nor special advantage," and that no influence should be exerted "of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose and constitute freely the form of its government." †

President Lincoln was notified of this alliance, and invited to become a party to it; but it had been arranged that there should be no delay for his reply. He declined the proposition,

* Mexican Affairs, 1862, p. 5.

† Ibid., p. 136.

admitting the right of these powers to judge for themselves the propriety of war, but expressing the hope that, in accordance with their own solemn declarations, they would refrain from attempts to subvert existing institutions in Mexico. A plan was submitted at the same time, suggested by Mr. Corwin and approved by the Secretary of State, providing that the United States should advance the interest on the Mexican debt on proper security given by that government, and thus avert the necessity of foreign invasion. This proposal was unsatisfactory to the triple alliance; and although a treaty was negotiated with Mexico on this basis, the Senate objected on general principles to its ratification, and the project was finally abandoned.*

Spain took the initiative, eager for military glory. In the latter part of December her fleet appeared off the Mexican coast. Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan d'Ulloa surrendered without firing a gun, and in the name of the allies were held as security for their demands. Napoleon, fearful of losing control of the movement, despatched, on learning this news, a larger force of French troops than had been originally contemplated, as an offset to the Spanish contingent. Great Britain, lukewarm and not over sanguine as to results, sent only seven hundred marines, who were soon recalled.

President Juarez wished for a peaceful settlement with the allies. The obnoxious law of repudiation — justified only by reason of the general impoverishment of the country — had already been repealed. The Commissioners under the treaty were received with courtesy, and allowed to advance towards the interior. At Soledad, on the 19th of February, 1862, preliminaries were signed which recognized the sovereignty of the existing government and pledged the good faith of the allies. The latter on landing had proclaimed to the Mexican people the honesty of their intentions.† Orizaba was fixed upon as

* Mexican Affairs, 1862, p. 187; Ibid., 1863, p. 8 et seq. Earl Russell states that he proposed making the United States a party to the triple alliance, and that France acceded, *but not without hesitation*. M. Thouvenel, on the other hand, contradicts the assertion, and says that France first suggested the invitation. The correspondence with Spain seems to confirm Earl Russell's statement.

† "They deceive you who would make you believe that behind our pretensions, as just as they are legitimate, come enveloped plans of conquest and restoration, and of interfering in your politics and government." See Mexican Affairs, 1862, p. 177.

the place of meeting for adjustment of mutual difficulties, and the day named was the 1st — afterwards the 15th — of April. But in the mean time a controversy sprung up. Almonte, a Mexican refugee, picked up in Europe by the Emperor Napoleon and used as a tool for his ambitious designs, landed at Vera Cruz, and, claiming the protection of the French flag, entered into correspondence with the enemies of the administration. President Juarez demanded that he should leave the country. This seemed right to the English and Spanish Commissioners, but those of France refused to give him up. So gross and wanton a violation of the treaty of London and the Soledad preliminaries could not be countenanced. The triple alliance was dissolved. Great Britain and Spain withdrew their forces; and France was left, as General Prim declared on parting from the country, to erect an imperial throne for the Archduke Maximilian.*

The mask was now thrown off. The French Commissioners, pretending that fresh insults had been offered them, joined hands with the Almonte revolutionists, and proclaimed war against the constituted authorities of Mexico. They appealed to the people to shake off the yoke of an oppressive minority, — as they termed the Juarez administration, — and to elect a government for themselves. "The banner of France has been planted on the Mexican soil," was the language of the invaders; "and that banner will not retreat. Let all honest men receive it as a friendly banner: let only madmen dare to attack it."

Great Britain doubtless joined the expedition simply to secure her material interests. She took care to hamper her dangerous colleagues with restrictions, and extricated herself from the embroilment as soon as possible. A fair adjustment of the British claims might have prevented the joint invasion; for liberal terms were proposed at an early day, which the Mexican Congress rejected. Spain in all probability contemplated conquest; but afterwards, perceiving her own plan impracticable, swung round to the side of Great Britain, through jealousy of the Maximilian movement. But France

* Mexican Affairs, 1863, p. 42 et seq.

from the outset had sinister designs, and resolved to force a quarrel. A random shot fired during a drunken brawl in the streets of Mexico was magnified into the attempted assassination of the French Minister, M. Saligny. While the treaty of London was under consideration, the Mexican Ambassador sought an interview with the French government, and made overtures for reconciliation in accordance with his instructions. He was interrupted hastily by M. Thouvenel: "We will not allow any explanation. We have given our orders in concert with England; and you will know through our Minister and our Admiral what are the demands of France." When the allies made up their accounts, the French claims were stated at the exorbitant estimate of twelve millions, including matters not specified by treaties, while their portion of the Mexican loan was only two hundred thousand dollars; and when the allies remonstrated, the reply was, "Each nation is the sole umpire of its demands." War was therefore the object and the necessary result of the French policy.

The bold words of the invaders were not borne out by their first acts. General Lorencez advanced with his forces upon Puebla, but was repulsed and forced to retire. The summer was passed in idleness at Orizaba. The initiative could not be resumed without fresh troops; Mexican guerillas cut off communication with the sea-coast, and the situation of the French army became perilous. In Europe the news of this disaster strengthened the general impression that the foolhardy enterprise would be abandoned, and the Mexican people left to pull down and build up their own institutions. Not such was Napoleon's purpose. He determined to send reinforcements, and asked of the legislative body an additional credit of fifteen million francs, which was unanimously voted. General Forey was appointed to the chief command, and invested with diplomatic powers superior to those of the French Commissioners. Almonte, who had assumed the title of supreme chief of the Mexican Republic, was ordered to dissolve his ministry, to abstain from issuing decrees, and to follow strictly further orders, placing himself under the new commander. General Forey, upon his arrival at Vera Cruz, proclaimed that the object of the French government was to liberate the Mexican

people, and then allow them to select freely their form of government. The grievances of France were no longer the pretext for war. It was to be a mission of civilization, in the Napoleonic sense, the propagation of monarchy and the Catholic faith by fire and sword. Before the month of November ended, about forty-two thousand French troops had landed on the Gulf coast, and General Forey took up his line of march for Puebla.*

The mystic autograph letter of Napoleon to Forey, written before the latter departed from France, throws considerable light on the imperial designs in America. The plan of establishing a strong government of the Latin race in Mexico to counterpoise the great Republic — this government to be, if possible, a monarchy — is set forth in unmistakable terms. It is not for the interest of France, the Emperor argues, that the United States shall seize all the Mexican Gulf, and thence command the Antilles as well as South America, and dispense the products of the New World. "If, on the other hand, Mexico maintains her independence and the integrity of her territory, if a stable government be there constituted with the assistance of France, we shall have restored to the Latin race on the other side of the Atlantic all its strength and its prestige; we shall have guaranteed security to our West India colonies and to those of Spain; we shall have established our friendly influence in the centre of America; and that influence, by creating immense markets for our commerce, will procure us the raw materials indispensable for our manufactures." † Such was the brilliant picture conjured up by the imperial fancy. Europe was to regenerate the New World; the course of empire was in a literal sense to take its way westward; and Napoleon was to be the Columbus of the enterprise.

The conquest of Mexico was thus the primary object of the Emperor's policy. The dismemberment of the Federal Union was secondary, but none the less necessary. So far as we were

* Mexican Affairs, 1863, pp. 194, 341. Great credit is due M. Romero, the Mexican Minister at Washington, for furnishing such documents to our government from time to time as enables a succinct account of this extraordinary invasion to be drawn up.

† Mexican Affairs, 1865, p. 190.

concerned, France (to use the language of one of her Ministers) waited upon events. In spite of that fanaticism which is a distinguishing trait of his character, Napoleon was not the man to commit himself. He did not often reduce his plans to writing, nor, having done so, suffer them to be divulged. No one could be more prudent in his means or selfish in his ends. He was a master of words, an adept in ambiguities. Cold, crafty, and unscrupulous, gracious in his manners, but of impenetrable reserve, he excelled in that dissimulation which misleads without falsifying, and that duplicity which passes with the simple for diplomacy. He was the master spirit of European politics. Intrigue was his weapon; his movements were covered by throwing forward his allies; and if necessary to beat a retreat, he contrived to cast the odium upon others. The imperial policy must be studied, therefore, rather in the light of deeds than of words.

Suspicion was soon directed to the French designs in Mexico, and the progress of events carefully watched. Prudence suggested that we should not rush into foreign war while suppressing a domestic insurrection of vast proportions; and the Juarez government had not exhibited such proof of skill or stability as to encourage the hope that open interference in its behalf would result favorably. Mr. Dayton was instructed to ascertain the Emperor's intentions as early as September, 1861, and to acquaint him with our express desire that Mexico should remain independent. M. Thouvenel replied, with emphasis, that France and England meant merely to realize their money debt.* The same assurances were given repeatedly, as Mr.

* And yet at this time, as appears from a despatch of M. Thouvenel, dated October 11, 1861, he was urging upon Earl Russell that the proposed treaty should be so worded as not to prevent the exercise eventually of a "legitimate participation" in the events which their operations might originate in Mexico. These are his words: "It is evidently the interest both of France and England to see there established such a state of things as will secure the interest existing already, and favor the devolopment of our exchanges with a country so richly endowed. The events just taking place in the United States add new importance and urgency to these considerations. In fact, we are led to suppose that, *if the issue of the American crisis were to accomplish the definitive separation of the South from the North*, both confederations would soon look after compensations, which the territory of Mexico, going to a social dissolution, would offer to their competition. . . . If the Mexicans themselves, being tired of their trials and decided to react against the disasters of

Dayton's despatches show, while the triple alliance lasted. The Emperor had no desire, it was said, to interfere in any way with the internal government of Mexico. Even when reinforcements under General Forey were sent forward, so earnest was the French government in disclaiming sinister designs, that no issue could fairly be made without raising a question of veracity. "If we must err at all," writes Secretary Seward, "it is safest to err on the side of sincere faith." The conduct of the President was frank, honorable, and at the same time discreet. France was notified that our sympathies were with Mexico; that we believed that no monarchical government founded by European intervention would have any prospect of security or permanency; that we were opposed to all schemes which threatened to overthrow the Mexican Republic and the Juarez administration; but that, at the same time, relying on the assurances of the Emperor Napoleon, we should pursue a policy of strict neutrality until it seemed proper to make a change, in which case he would be duly informed. This attitude of our government was displeasing to a large body in Congress, who considered that the Monroe doctrine, so called, should be strongly enforced; and an altercation arose in the spring of 1864 between the House of Representatives and the Secretary of State; but the latter maintained that, while the sentiment of Congress was the unanimous sentiment of the country, the question as to the policy to be pursued was a purely executive one; and his course remained as before.*

the past, should draw a new vitality from the dangers which threaten them; if, coming back and consulting the instincts of their race, for instance, they should find in the establishment of a monarchy the repose and prosperity which in vain they have looked for in republican institutions, I did not think we ought absolutely to refuse to aid them, if there was a chance; bearing, nevertheless, in mind, that they were perfectly free to choose whatever means they might think best to attain their object. I added, that, in case my prevision were to be realized, the government of the Emperor, free from all preoccupation, rejected in advance the candidature for any prince of the imperial house; and that, desirous to treat gently all susceptibilities, it would see with pleasure *that the election of the Mexicans and the assent of the powers should fall upon some prince of the house of Austria.*" See Mexican Affairs, 1865, p. 170. It need hardly be added, that this "prevision" was fulfilled to the letter.

* Mexican Affairs, 1862, p. 216 et seq.; Ibid., 1863, p. 530 et seq.; McPherson's History of the Rebellion, p. 349 et seq. It is proper to add, that some of the facts connected with the Mexican policy above mentioned did not come to light

We may now understand why Napoleon was so anxious to become the great pacificator in the struggle between North and South. That ill-favored apparition of a friendly mediation, which stalked upon the stage at regular intervals, as if to intimidate us into compliance, was part of the Mexican drama. It need not excite surprise that the Emperor tendered his first services just after he had given belligerent rights to the Southern malecontents; that, while pouring ruin and desolation into Mexico, he deplored most deeply our devastating strife; that just after Forey's troops had set sail he proposed another triple alliance, for bringing about an armistice of six months between "the Federal government and the Confederates of the South"; that, failing in this, he unbosomed himself of his sentiments to the Cabinet at Washington, and entreated that commissioners should be appointed from the contending sections to ascertain whether separation was an extreme which could be no longer avoided;* that after his persistent officiousness had been rebuked by Congress in resolutions declaring that foreign mediation was unreasonable and inadmissible, and that any further attempt in that direction would be regarded as an unfriendly act, he informed the leaders of the Secession cause in Parliament of his readiness to recognize the South if Great Britain would take the first step. So far as related to European arbitrament in our disturbances, President Lincoln was steadfast and immovable; he was not to be duped by honeyed words or soft explanations; and although the timorous, as well as the treacherous, had sometimes the folly to suggest mediation as the panacea of the national ills, he was not so foolish as to take the medicine.

After numerous delays General Forey effected the capture of Puebla in May, 1863, and immediately ordered the wholesale confiscation of the estates of such of its inhabitants as still resisted. This cruel and impolitic measure was disapproved

for a considerable time; so that our government was often groping in the dark as to the mysterious designs of the Emperor.

* "The sentiment to which we have yielded is too sincere for indifference to find a place in our thoughts, and that we should cease to be painfully affected whilst the war continues to rage." See M. Drouyn de Lhuys's letter to M. Mercier, Jan. 9, 1863.

by the French government, but was only partially revoked. The Church party, which had favored the invading army, now gave in their allegiance. Juarez and his Cabinet fled from the capital, and on the 10th of June the tri-colored flag waved over its deserted halls. Another decree of confiscation followed. Six days afterwards General Forey organized the provisional government of Mexico. This consisted of a junta of thirty-five, named by him, who, with two hundred and fifteen others chosen by themselves, constituted an Assembly of Notables, for the purpose of indicating the will of the people. The executive authority was committed to a council of three, with Almonte at the head. As the work for the Assembly was already laid out, it took them but one day to adopt unanimously the resolve which abolished the commonwealth and substituted a monarchical form of government; and, not to leave any doubt of their allegiance to the French rule, they offered the imperial crown to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, and, in case of his refusal, to such other Catholic prince as his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon might indicate. So badly played was this farce, however, that, in order to save appearances, before his acceptance of the crown the Archduke requested that this election should be ratified by the suffrage of the Mexican people. The ratification was effected at the point of the bayonet; and the formalities were at length complete. No one could manage such matters better than the Emperor of the French; for in his own interest he had managed a similar experiment of popular suffrage.*

After sundry impediments had been removed, the Archduke Maximilian, on the 10th day of April, 1864, formally accepted the sway of the new empire. The Mexican deputation were received at his palace of Miramar, and laid their symbol of fidelity at his feet. Amidst the shouts of an Austrian populace and the roar of Austrian artillery Maximilian was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, and a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral at Trieste. Nor was the Papal benediction wanting; though this had not sufficed to keep the fabric of Jefferson Davis from tottering towards its destruction. A convention

* Mexican Affairs, 1865, pp. 251, 373.

between Napoleon and Maximilian, now entered into, provided that the French troops should remain in Mexico until native forces could be organized to supply their place; that in the mean time the French commander should have equal authority with the Emperor in determining all movements and points of occupation; that the expenses of the French invasion, fixed at the sum of two hundred and seventy million francs, and all future expenses of a standing army, should be assumed by the new empire; and that the French indemnities, for which the war was originally undertaken, should likewise be paid. Under such auspices, oppressed with this millstone of obligations, Maximilian took his departure for his new dominions, having renounced all right to the throne of Austria so long as the Mexican dynasty should endure; and for him remained the discouraging task of planting a throne where he had found only a crown.*

In the last chapter of the Mexican struggle, fact and rumor are strangely blended. Direct negotiations between the Emperor Napoleon and leading Southern Confederates for the disintegration of the Federal Union, a proposed cession of Texas and Louisiana to France, the formation of imperial states on the Western frontier to seduce California and New Mexico from loyalty, — these are among the floating reports of the last two years. A most palpable fact, however, is the late attempt of Maximilian to introduce a system of peonage within his borders, similar to the slavery which we have lately overthrown, and thus to open an asylum for our discontented fellow-citizens, where they may live in peace by the sweat of other men's brows. The policy of the United States since the Rebellion has also been more sharply defined. Napoleon is now informed that the new government is not likely to be recognized as the ruling power *de facto* of Mexico under any circumstances, and that it is time for him to withdraw his troops and abandon his foolish experiment to its fate.

We do not desire war with France or any other nation. We seek not the annexation of Mexico, with its ignorant population and quarrelsome factions. We are not advocates of that mis-

* Diplomatic Correspondence, 1864, Vol. III. pp. 67, 74.

interpretation of the Monroe doctrine which compels the United States to fight the battles of other nations. At the same time we cannot but feel how important it is to the interest and welfare of America to perpetuate democratic institutions on this continent, and to maintain a community of republics, united in principle and feeling. The advantages, not so apparent to this generation, are for the millions yet unborn. This at least is certain, — monarchy and democracy cannot grow up and flourish side by side. One or the other must finally yield. Napoleon's mission may be that of a civilization which centralizes power by making one man the vicegerent of God on earth, while consigning the mass of humanity to a hopeless vassalage; ours is the higher mission of peace and good-will to all mankind, — a civilization which seeks to raise the poor and downtrodden, and to secure to all the greatest share of liberty consistent with public safety. To us is committed the ark of a chartered freedom; and unless we are cheated by delusive hopes or yield to cowardly fears, the Man of Destiny must withdraw to his legitimate field, and sooner or later "this imperial exotic, planted by foreign care and propped by foreign bayonets," must vanish like chaff before the whirlwind.

Little remains to be said of our foreign relations during the war. Spain generally sided with England and France, sharing the responsibility of their schemes, although possibly not the confidence of the schemers. Switzerland and Italy sympathized with us, but their influence was not sensibly felt. The European states generally echoed the sentiments of the two leading sovereigns, but more feebly as our cause gained strength. Russia alone of the great powers heartily supported us throughout the bitter strife, and our relations were of the most cordial nature. An inter-oceanic telegraph, which has already been commenced on the Pacific side, will doubtless knit us yet closer in bonds of sympathy. China and Japan have also favored the United States. The former forbade Rebel cruisers to enter her ports or receive supplies, and both of them have lately extended commercial facilities to our merchants. Among the most important treaties negotiated by President Lincoln and ratified by the Senate are the treaties with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave-trade, and

for the settlement of certain claims of the Hudson's Bay and Puget Sound Agricultural Companies; with Mexico, for extradition of criminals, and postal facilities; with Bolivia concerning navigation; with Liberia to secure commercial privileges; with the Ottoman Empire, for facilities in trade; with Ecuador, for the mutual adjustment of claims; with Peru, for the settlement of claims; with Belgium, for the extinguishment of the Scheldt dues, and commercial facilities; besides numerous treaties with the Indian tribes. Congress by joint resolution has also given notice of the termination of the reciprocity treaty with Great Britain regulating the naval force on the Great Lakes, by reason of the hostile expeditions prepared on the Canada frontiers.

Secretary Seward's services as a diplomatist deserve more than a passing notice. To his admirable skill, foresight, and good judgment the country owes its deliverance from perils and embarrassments such as it never before encountered. His fairness and good temper have been more than a match for the plausible insincerity of Thouvenel and Drouyn de Lhuys, and the haughty arrogance of Earl Russell. If he is prone to indulge in philosophical dissertation, yet the philosophy is sound; if his style is sometimes that of the schoolmaster, it must be remembered that he had pupils who required constant drilling in the rudiments of American constitutional law and free institutions. Some of his despatches, especially that relating to the Trent case, have a world-wide renown, and there are sentences scattered through his published volumes which deserve to live forever. Above all, his correspondence is pervaded with an enlarged and enlightened spirit of Christianity free from cant or bigotry, a genuine love of country, and a just comprehension of those principles of international law which shape and direct American policy as distinguished from the European system. He brought to his work the leading qualities requisite for a successful diplomatist; not the least of which is self-control. We should not forget the circumstances under which he accepted his present situation; those long services as the pilot of reform which placed him at the head of his party, and made him its most prominent candidate for the Presidency; the calmness with which he bore his disappointment; the gen-

erous support which he gave to his almost unknown rival; his efforts to give confidence to public sentiment during that fearful winter when men were discussing compromises and sacrifices as the condition of the existence of the Union; and his devotion to the work of maintaining, as the head of the new Cabinet, the just balance of our foreign relations during a stormy period,—never swayed by passion or prejudice, never temporizing to gain personal popularity.

Mr. Seward will rank rather as a progressive statesman than as a radical reformer; but of the former class he is, to our mind, the greatest since the days of Jefferson. His recent efforts in the labor of reconstruction will not, we fear, add to his reputation for wisdom. But no statesman has more clearly forecast the years, or, with so little display of merely personal ambition, accomplished so much in revolutionizing public sentiment. He has been true to his convictions, and at the same time liberal in the application of a principle; his position has generally been in advance of his party, and the people have steadily drawn to his support. Twice at least, while in his present position, has he checked the current of popular opinion, and won applause at the end. He has lived to see the success of his labors. The Constitution no longer is in opposition to the "higher law"; the "irrepressible conflict" has become a matter of the past; and the national cause was victorious, if not within "ninety days," at least within the good time of Providence. His course is nearly run. His way has led him through a cloud "not of war only, but detractions rude"; yet if he conducts the Mexican problem to a peaceful solution, his fame as a diplomatist will be almost unrivalled; and he will bear to his retirement, not only the consciousness of duty well performed, but that reward which is the highest an American statesman can obtain, — the lasting gratitude of his countrymen.